"...with the smell of the woods, and the wind in the trees, they will forget the rush and strain of all the other long weeks of the year, and for a short time at least, the days will be good for their hearts and for their souls." —President Franklin Roosevelt speaking about vacationers to national parks in his speech at Shenandoah National Park’s dedication, July 3, 1936.

I. History
A. Native Americans – 8,000 – 9,000 years ago
   1. seasonally visited area to hunt, gather food, find sources for & make stone tools.
B. Europeans - ~ 300 years ago
   1. hunters and trappers
   2. 1750 – first settlers in lower hollows near springs and streams
   3. 1750 – 1900: homesteads, mills and stores, logging, mining, vacation resorts
   4. 1900 – 1935
      a. 1910 – lumber companies stripped away most of hardwood forest and blight from China wiped out chestnuts
      b. 1924 – committee formed to address need for National Park in east (Mather) and presented proposal to Congress in 1926
      c. construction of Skyline Drive
      d. CCC in park area
      e. 1936 – Roosevelt dedicated park at Big Meadows
      f. now 307 square miles - 4% developed (resembles what first explorers saw)

II. Geographic Setting
A. straddles the Blue Ridge (easternmost Appalachians) ~9 miles wide here
B. Potomac River crosses to the north and James and Roanoke Rivers to the south
C. To east is Piedmont and Coastal Plain and to west is the limestone Shenandoah Valley, east edge of Valley and Ridge, and the Allegheny Plateau

III. Geology
A. Setting - two mountain ranges, spanning > 1 BY of earth’s history.
B. 1.2 - 1.0 BYA
   1.) collisions of tectonic micro-plates raised Grenville mountain
      a. heat and pressure melted and deformed the rocks in the mountain’s core.
      b. Old Rag Granite and Pedlar Formation (gneiss and granodiorite)
      1.) Swift Run Formation (formed from debris eroded from volcanic rocks and ash ejected during earlier phases of volcanism)
C. 1.0 BY – 570 MYA - pressures eased and erosion dominated
   1. landscape of rolling hills and occasional higher points

D. 570 MYA
   1. tectonic plates moved apart & lava erupted onto the surface along rift zones
      a. stretched for thousands of miles and filled in the valleys – 20’ – 100’ thick
      b. sheer, jagged cliffs of Stony Man, Hawksbill, and other peaks
      c. Big Meadows on top of one of the lava flows
      d. created staircase-like topography of sheer cliffs & flat benches (Stony Man)
      e. major waterfalls located where streams cut through layers of lava

2. Catoctin Formation - originally composed of basalt; rocks metamorphosed
   a. grey & dark green with minerals & textures not normally found in basalt
   b. called greenstone, to distinguish it from unaltered basalt

E. Cambrian – 400 MYA
   1. Rift between the plates – water filled in and formed Iapetus Ocean
      a. thick deposits of river, lagoon, and beach sediments formed sedimentary rocks
      b. Chilhowee Group
         1.) river and beach deposits compose the Weverton Formation
         2.) lagoonal deposits compose the Harpers Formation (formerly Hampton )
         3.) quartz sand deposits dominate the Antietam Formation (formerly Erwin)

4.) 350 – 300 MYA
   1. tectonic plate movement reversed and Africa collided with North America
      a. closed the Iapetus Ocean
      b. created Appalachian Mountains-likely as large & dramatic as the Himalayas.
      c. layers of sediment that once lay miles below water were now thrust up
         1.) fused together and altered by heat and pressure
         2.) white quartzites of Erwin Fm form cliffs and boulder fields of Rocky Mountain, Calvary Rocks, and Blackrock South.
         3.) new minerals grew to replace the original ones
            a.) shiny, platy appearance of new mica minerals in Hampton Fm
         2.) form the foundation of Shenandoah Blue Ridge
         3.) created rounded, boulder-strewn summits of Old Rag Mountain, Hogback Mountain, and Marys Rock.

5.) 200 MYA
   1. plates reversed direction, formed Atlantic Ocean & erosion dominated